1: Blackwood E-5 (1929-1930) 1935
ON6 Buka ON6
Kurtatchi

would repay fuller investigation from the psychological standpoint than I was able to give it.

The boys wearing the *upi* are not exempt from taking their share in the work of the village. They are encouraged by the older men to share in their daily round. They help in cutting the bush to prepare the ground for planting taro, though they are not allowed in the taro garden while women are working there. They are taken fishing, both ordinary reef-fishing and bonito-fishing. They are taught the technique of canoe-making, house-building, and so on. They join in the ceremonial dances, going round in wheel-formation with the men.

As well as the activities which they share with the adult men, they have also their own. Parties of them were always going off into the bush on their own, either to hunt for small creatures to cook for themselves, or just to wander about. Not wanting to be always with their elders, and debarred from playing with girls of their own age, they have every inducement to develop an organized 'gang' among themselves. There is a word, *tobarupi*, which means 'all the boys' (in a given village). There seems to be a considerable amount of solidarity in their life together, and I do not think that any boy wearing the *upi* was deliberately made to feel an outsider. One of the boys at Kurtatchi was deaf and dumb, but he had been granted the privilege of putting on the *upi*, and was accepted by the others without distinction. They used to laugh at him sometimes, but it was always in friendly fashion, and they never left him out of their pursuits, having evolved a system of signs whereby he could be made to understand what they wanted to convey to him.

In times past, whatever secret chafing may have gone on in the privacy of the *tobar*, the boys seem to have accepted the restrictions under which they laboured with a good grace, and to have felt that they were compensated by the importance conferred upon them. But at the time of my visit signs of resentment at the irksomeness of the taboos might be detected among the older boys. They were supported in their rebellion by the Missions and the employers of labour, and some of the younger men shared their point of view, though every one was careful not to voice his unorthodox views too loudly, in case of punishment either by the *sorar* or by the *tsunaur*. One or two men with young sons told me, in private, that they were not going to let their children put on the *upi* when

437 failing him, brother, son, or other male relative, to provide fish
438 for exchange. Sometimes a man would apologize for not selling me some fish for which I had asked him, on the ground that his wife would not have enough for the *toan* next day. A supply is [251] sometimes prepared in advance by half-smoking the fish so that they will keep for a short time. Each woman's load is her personal [422] property, and the goods for which she exchanges it are also her property, for the use of her own household. There is no pooling. If they are short of fish they will sometimes supplement it with sticks of tobacco.

437 I accompanied my friends from Petats on several trips to the mainland of Buka for this purpose. When the two parties met, packs were undone and a rapid inspection of fish and counting out of taro took place. The people of each party kept together; they went round holding out the goods they had to offer, and the buyers saw to it that the fish were of the appropriate size for the number of taro offered in exchange. I saw one woman try hard to obtain two small fish for four taro, but eventually she had to be content with one. Sometimes they would get very excited and snatch the fish and taro from each other, or two women would grab the same article, almost tearing it in pieces. Two of the Buka women brought loads of dried opossum, and these also were exchanged for [571] fish. The whole affair was got over as quickly as possible; there was very little gossip, and it was clearly regarded as a business, not a social occasion. Both sides began their homeward journey as soon as the exchange was finished, not stopping to chat or to chew betel, though we usually sat down to do so as soon as we were well [609] out of sight. Even now, there is a certain amount of distrust between the people of the coast and the people of the hills, though relations are outwardly friendly.

437 The fish-taro exchange is a permanent feature in the life of all
438 the villages in this area. In the case of exchanges between distant villages, appointments are made from one meeting to the next by [211] exchanging bits of string in each of which a knot has been tied for each day which is to elapse before the next excursion. Some specified individual is in charge of the string, and cuts off one knot each day till the time arrives. On the occasions on which I accompanied the party, we seldom waited for more than a short time before the other people arrived. Once, when they were rather longer in coming, some of the women wanted to go farther along